

Goal

4

All youth have access to educational and economic opportunity.

A Shared Vision:

All Massachusetts youth **grow up to be healthy**, caring and economically self-sufficient adults.

A. EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY AND ACHIEVEMENT

Massachusetts residents have among the highest levels of educational attainment in the nation (US Census Bureau, 2000). This intellectual resource is a major strength.

GRADES KINDERGARTEN - 12

Enrollment

The majority of children and youth in Massachusetts attend public schools (Table 4-1).

Table 4-1. Grade K-12 enrollment in public and private schools
Massachusetts, 2001-02 school year

Type of School	Number of Students	% of Total
Public School	974,015	87.9
Private School	133,440	12.0

Source: MDOE, *School District Profiles –State Profile*, 2002

The student population in grades kindergarten through twelve has become increasingly diverse over the past ten years in terms of race/ethnicity and primary language (Table 4-2).

Table 4-2. Changes in grades K-12 public school enrollment
Massachusetts, 1991, 2002

Student Characteristic	1991	2002
Race/ethnicity:		
African-American	7.7%	8.6%
Asian	3.3%	4.5%
Hispanic	7.8%	10.8%
Native American	0.2%	0.3%
White	81.0%	75.7%
Other:		
Special education	17.3%	15.4%
Primary language is not English	11.1%	13.3%
Limited English proficiency	5.1%	5.0%
Transitional bilingual education	4.5%	3.0%
Low-income	19.7%	25.3%
K-12 public school enrollment	836,383	974, 015

Source: MDOE, *School District Profiles –State Profile, 2002*

High School Completion

Educational attainment is highly correlated with income level. Individuals without a high school diploma earn only 70% of earnings among high school graduates (Day and Newburger, 2002).

Healthy People 2010 Indicator: Increase high school completion.

In 2000, four out of five young adults in Massachusetts completed high school by age 24, somewhat higher than the national average (Table 4-3). Graduation rates continue to rise with increasing age into adulthood.

Table 4-3. Percentage of young adults 18-24 years old who have completed high school
Massachusetts and United States, 2000

Massachusetts	U.S.	HP2010 target
80.2%	76.5%	*

* Benchmark not set for 18-24 year olds.

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

- Young adults ages 18-24 with a disability are more than one a half times as likely to have not graduated from high school, compared to young adults ages 18-24 who do not have a disability (MBRFSS, 2000).
- Educational attainment is strongly related to disability status. 33% of adults without a high school education had disabilities, compared to 15% of college graduates (MBRFSS, 1998-2000).

Student Performance Assessment

In 1998, the Massachusetts Department of Education (MDOE) began implementation of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment Systems (MCAS) tests for all students enrolled in public schools. Student test performance is reported according to four categories: Advanced, Proficient, Needs Improvement, and Warning/Failing (grade 10 only). Starting with the graduating class of 2003, students must perform at the Needs Improvement level or above on the grade 10 English Language Arts and Mathematics tests in order to earn a high school competency determination.

- Over the five years that MCAS has been administered, the proportion of 10th graders whose performance level is Advanced, Proficient, and Needs Improvement has increased. (Table 4-4). However, as of November 2002, almost one fifth of students (19%) of the class of 2003 have yet to earn a high school competency determination.
- Failure rates are approximately twice as high as the state average in urban areas and among African-American and Hispanic students.

Table 4-4. Percentage* of grade 10 students at each MCAS performance level¹
Massachusetts, 1998-2002

Performance Level	Year				
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
English Language Arts					
Advanced	5	4	7	15	19
Proficient	33	30	29	36	40
Needs Improvement	34	34	30	31	27
Failing	28	32	34	18	14
Mathematics					
Advanced	7	9	15	18	20
Proficient	17	15	18	27	24
Needs Improvement	24	23	22	30	31
Failing	52	53	45	25	25

*Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Source: MDOE, Spring 2001 MCAS Tests: Summary of State Results (October 2001).

School Dropouts

The Massachusetts high school dropout rate in 2000-2001 was 3.5% and has remained essentially stable for the past six school years (Table 4-5). Due to the increasing enrollment in that time period, the actual number of dropouts rose from 8,177 to 9,380.

¹ See *Technical Notes* for further information on how denominator of students is calculated.
A Shared Vision for Massachusetts Youth and Young Adults, 2003
Goal 4

Table 4-5. Public School Dropout* Information, Grade 9-12
Massachusetts, School Years 1995/96 – 2000/01

Dropout Information	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Dropout Rate**, Grade 9 – 12	3.4%	3.4%	3.4%	3.6%	3.5%	3.5%
Number of Dropouts	8,177	8,453	8,582	9,188	9,199	9,380
Grade 9 – 12 Enrollment	240,347	246,757	252,633	258,026	265,795	271,700

* A dropout is a student in grade nine through twelve who leaves school prior to graduation for reasons other than transfer to another school and who does not re-enroll by October 1 of the following school year.

** The dropout rate is the number of students who drop out over a one-year period, from July 1 to June 30, minus the number of returned dropouts, divided by the October 1 enrollment.

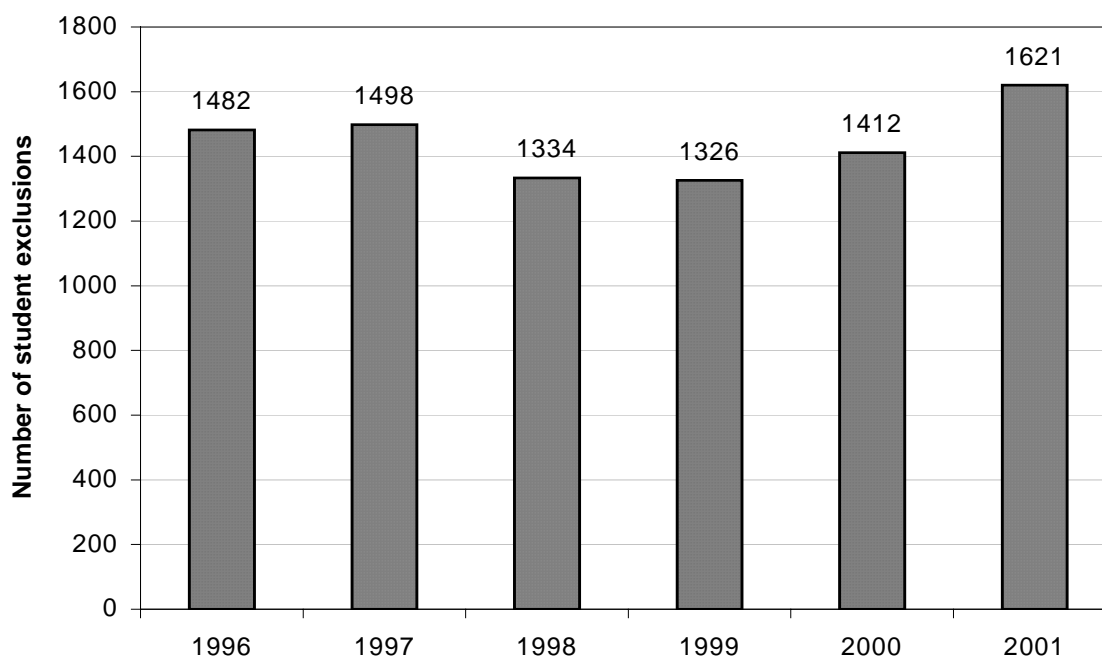
Source: MDOE, *Dropout Rates in Massachusetts Public Schools, 2000-2001, 2002*

- The annual dropout rate varies widely among individual schools across the Commonwealth. Fifty-five percent of schools had a dropout rate of 2.5% or less in 2000-2001, while approximately 7% of schools had a dropout rate higher than 10%.
- Dropout rates vary widely by race/ethnicity. In 2000-01, Hispanic students had the highest annual dropout rate at 8.0%, followed by 6.1% for African-American students. Asian students had a 3.9% dropout rate; Native American students had a rate of 3.2%; and white students, a rate of 2.6%.
- The dropout rate for male students was 4.1% and for female students 2.8%.
- For the 144,888 special education students in grades six through twelve in 2000-01, the dropout rate was 1.5%.
- Using annual grade-specific dropout data, MDOE projects the cumulative dropout rate over the four-year high school period for each graduating class. For the class of 2004, the projected four-year dropout rate is 13%, the same as the projected rate for the class of 2003. As with the annual dropout rate, there is a wide range in the projected four-year dropout rate among schools and school districts. The five school districts with the highest projected dropout rates for the class of 2004 are Lawrence (38%), Chelsea (33%), Lowell (33%), Boston (30%) and Springfield (28%) (MDOE, *Dropout Rates in Massachusetts Public Schools, 2000-01*).

Student exclusions

Student exclusions - the removal of a student from school for disciplinary reasons for more than ten consecutive school days, including permanent or indefinite removal – have increased 22% in the past three years (Figure 4-1).

Figure 4-1. Total student exclusions*
Massachusetts, school years 1995/96-2000/2001



*Exclusions are based on individual events, not students. Some students are excluded more than once in a given school year (In 2000/01, 46 students were excluded more than once).

Source: MDOE, *Student Exclusions in Massachusetts Public Schools, 2000-2001, 2002*

- Student exclusions involving weapons on school premises (22% of all exclusions) and illegal substances on school premises (26%), increased from the preceding year by 2% and 3% respectively.
- Minority students are disproportionately represented among student exclusions. Hispanic students represented 30% and African-American students 27% of all exclusions in 2000/01.
- Seventy-one percent of all students who were excluded from school were provided with alternative education. Alternative education programs include alternative high schools for students with disciplinary problems, GED programs, special education courses, or services through the Education Services in Institutional Settings (ESIS) program.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

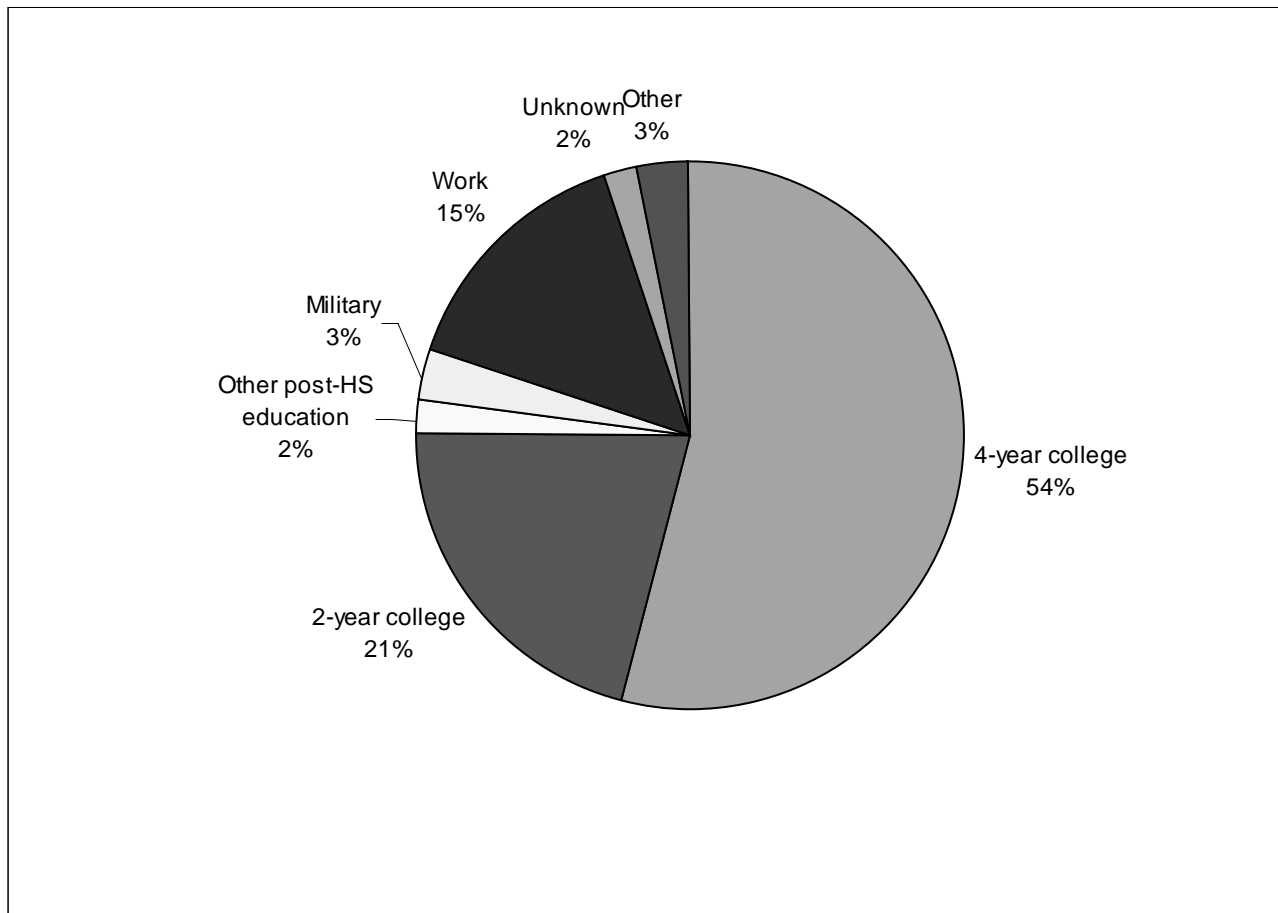
Post-secondary education contributes significantly to higher income levels. Individuals with a bachelor's level college degree have 150% the annual earnings of high school graduates (Day and Newburger, 2002).

Plans after High School

The proportion of graduating high school seniors who plan to continue their education has increased steadily over the last twenty years.

- For the Class of 2000, 75% of Massachusetts high school graduates plan to continue their education at a two- or four-year college (Figure 4-2), up from 53% in 1981.
- Fifteen percent of graduates planned to go directly to work, compared to 30% in 1981.

Figure 4-2. Post-High School plans of graduating seniors
Massachusetts, 2000



Source: MDOE, *Plans of High School Graduates: Class of 2000*, 2002

Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities

“While Massachusetts has many resources to promote transition from childhood home to independence, young people with disabilities still face major barriers to autonomy and independence...they have the same aspirations as their peers. They want to work, participate in recreation, and lead independent lives. Youth with disabilities, however, face barriers to independence in all these areas.”

- MDPH, Massachusetts Initiative for Youth with Disabilities, 2001.

For youth with special health care needs or disabilities, the transition from school to adult life, including post-secondary education and employment, has particular challenges. Timely transition planning is important to assure that the best possible decisions are made and steps taken.

- Chapter 688, also known as “Turning 22”, is a legally-mandated Massachusetts transition planning program that provides a two-year planning process for young adults with severe disabilities who will lose their entitlements to special education upon graduation or at age 22. The program provides a single point of entry into the adult human services system.
- Youth with disabilities and their parents identified a range of barriers to smooth transition to adult life and needed supports in a 1997 needs assessment. These included overlapping, uncoordinated mechanisms for implementation of mandated transition planning; discontinuity between schools and systems that support adults with disabilities; inadequate preparation for adult life; lack of incentives or supports for early attention to transition; lack of communication and understanding between health care providers and both schools and community supports; lack of models for medical transition; and lack of capacity in the adult health care system to provide care that promotes autonomy (Timmons et al, 1997).
- The Massachusetts Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) works with the Massachusetts Department of Education to support effective transitions from school life to more independent life within the community for youth that meet its eligibility criteria. In fiscal year 2002, DMR provided individualized home and community supports to 198 students ages 12-22. DMR transitions approximately 450-500 young adults into its adult service system each year (DMR, 2002).

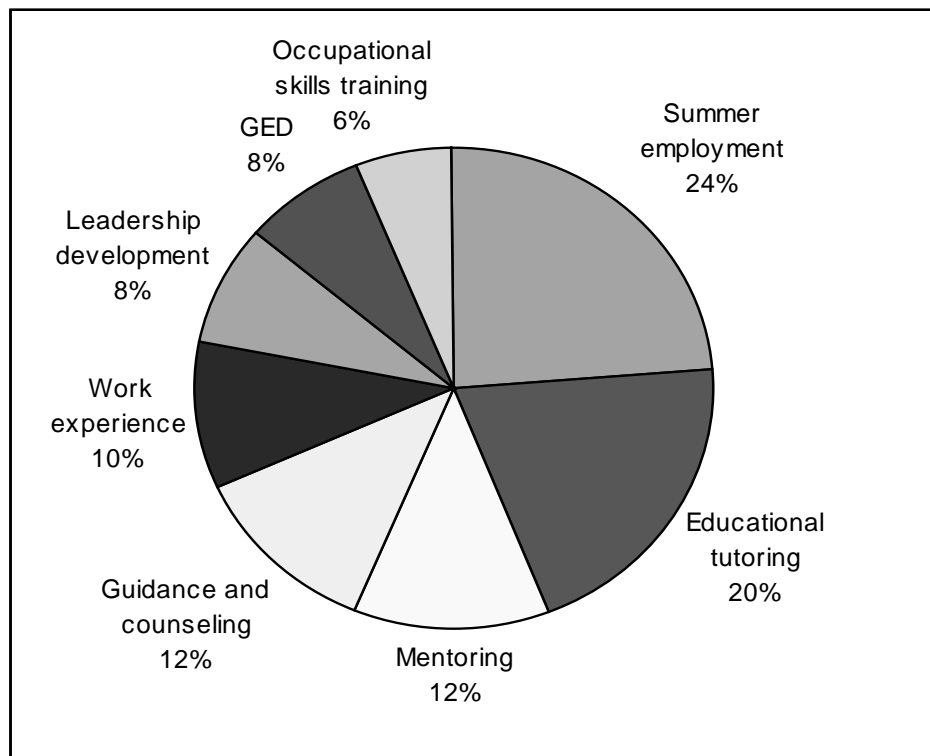
B. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The primary means of promoting positive youth workforce development and participation is the Commonwealth’s implementation of the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) (see text on page 70).

- In July 2002, approximately 4,000 Massachusetts youth were participating in WIA through one of eight activities or services, with each youth participating in an average of two workforce development activities (Figure 4-3).

Figure 4-3. Distribution of workforce development activities as percentage of overall activity*
Massachusetts, July 2002



*A total of 8,600 activities were offered to 4,000 youth.
Source: Executive Office of Human Services, 2002

- Of young adults, ages 18 and older, about 75% of those who completed WIA services earned a credential and entered employment with about a \$4,000 earnings gain. These outcomes exceed the projected benchmarks of 63% with earned credentials and a \$3100 earnings gain.
- Of youth ages 14-18, about 91% of those who completed WIA services attained the targeted skills goal and about 60% of those who left high school earned a high school diploma or GED and entered employment.

Workforce Investment for Youth in Massachusetts

The federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) is designed to encourage greater streamlining and coordination of workforce development programs for youth, adults, dislocated workers, and persons with disabilities. WIA focuses on the community-based development of youth workforce investment *systems*, rather than on short-term interventions or categorical programs. It encourages communities to offer a broad range of coordinated services including assistance in academic and occupational learning; development of leadership skills; and preparation for further education or training, and eventual employment.

Program Elements: WIA youth services include ten program elements that comprise a menu of services to be provided in combination or alone, as needed during a youth's development. These include tutoring, study skills training, and instruction; alternative education; summer employment, when linked to academic and occupational learning; paid and unpaid work experiences; occupational skills training; leadership development; supportive services; adult mentoring; follow-up services; and comprehensive guidance and counseling.

Eligibility: Youth ages 14-21 who meet at least one of the following criteria are eligible for WIA-funded youth services: deficient in basic literacy skills; a school dropout; homeless, a runaway, or a foster child; pregnant or a parent; an offender; or requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment.

Program implementation: The WIA youth services component is coordinated by sixteen local Youth Councils across Massachusetts, each of which is a subgroup of a WIA-mandated Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB). The Youth Councils and LWIBs oversee the local process for providing the appropriate mix of services to individual participants. Each Youth Council: awards WIA funds to youth service providers on a competitive basis; promotes a coherent youth development system across a wide range of agencies and youth service providers; recommends or establishes local youth policy; helps coordinate and integrate resources to leverage youth investment beyond the funds available through WIA; tracks outcomes of youth investment, including instructional gains, and success in getting and keeping employment; and advocates for changes in programs to improve quality and increase positive youth outcomes.

The federal Ticket to Work and the Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 (TWIIA) was designed to create a climate for innovative state and federal policy development around employment for people with disabilities. Implementation of TWIIA has involved extensive policymaking and changes at the state level. This important piece of legislation has created many opportunities for states to evolve both workforce policies and Medicaid policy for people with disabilities previously unable to work because of the poverty trap of the public benefits program eligibility.

- In Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission is working to implement TWIIA and increase the number of young adults (and adults) with disabilities in the workplace.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

The number of youth in the labor force is highest during the summer months, but many youth work throughout the year. Nationally, the most common places of employment for youth are retail trade, including restaurants (36%) and services (27%) (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002).

- Sixty-seven percent of Massachusetts 16-17 year olds were employed at some time in 1998, working an average of 15 hours a week. This accounts for seasonal fluctuations (US Census Bureau, 1999)
- The unemployment rate of Massachusetts youth in 1999 was 6.8% for youth ages 16-19, and 5.4% for young adults ages 20-24, compared to the overall state unemployment rate of 3.2% (US Census Bureau, 2000).
- Among adults ages 18-64, those with disabilities were less likely to be employed (59%) than adults without disabilities (83%) (MBRFSS, 1998-2000).